

## INTRODUCTION

*Birkholz*

Hello and good evening.

I am State Senator Patty Birkholz from Saugatuck.

*Shackleton*

And I am State Representative Scott Shackleton from Sault Ste. Marie.

Earlier tonight, in her annual State of the State address, Governor Granholm outlined her plans for two-thousand and four.

On behalf of the Republican majorities in both the House and Senate, Patti and I would like to pledge that we are ready to work with the Governor and her administration to do what's right for the people of Michigan.

We agree on much, and one area for sure is our desire to work together to do what's best for the people of our state.

We would also like to talk with you about our vision for the future of our state and its families.

It's a vision focused on economic opportunity and good jobs for people who need them.

It's a vision built around fiscal responsibility, compassion, a good education and doing what's right for people, not what's easiest for government.

And it's a vision dedicated to protecting the way we live our lives in Michigan.

*Birkholz*

We started two-thousand three in Lansing with our state budget in a deep, deep hole.

Unemployment was going up and people were losing their jobs.

Then, we got news that Pfizer and Pharmacia were merging – putting more jobs at risk – and Northwest Airlines was laying off workers in Southeast Michigan, and Steelcase was laying off workers in West Michigan.

Tonight, the Governor outlined a new vision for a new year, but still, we continue to face the challenges of last year.

Once again, we must cut spending to eliminate another budget deficit.

Our unemployment rate is one of the highest in the nation.

And already this year, another Michigan manufacturer announced plans to pull up stakes and move to Mexico, taking twenty-seven hundred jobs with it.

*Shackleton*

Still, with all this bad economic news, there is good news to report.

Across America, it looks more and more each day like President Bush's economic recovery plan is working.

The stock market is up, 401k accounts are growing, the national economy is back on track, and most importantly, job providers are putting "Help Wanted" signs back in the storefront windows.

The rest of the nation has gained over a quarter million new jobs since just last summer. Yet, Michigan's economy continues to lag, and our families continue to struggle with lay-offs, plant closings and an uncertain future.

While President Bush's national economy strengthening, our economy here in Michigan is still struggling.

We believe the time for talk is past and the time to act – the time to create jobs and grow our economy – is right now.

Tonight, on behalf of the Republican majorities in both the House and the Senate, we make this simple, straightforward commitment to you:

We will fight for every Michigan job, and we won't stop fighting until every person who wants to work can find a job.

## THE REPUBLICAN VISION

*Birkholz*

Good jobs are the fuel that drives our state forward. And right now, Michigan is running on fumes.

Good jobs provide families with the income they need for food, heat and clothes.

Good jobs bring more revenue to the state treasury to help fund important priorities like our schools, our roads and our local police and fire departments.

So much of life in our state – so much of the Republican vision for Michigan – revolves around helping people find and keep a good job.

This is why we and our fellow Republicans wasted no time last fall in sending the Governor a nine-point plan to help local job providers and invite more businesses to come to Michigan.

*Shackleton*

Tonight, we would like to thank the governor for signing many of those bills into law.

It was a first step, and it will help workers and small businesses in our state.

Next, Republicans in the Legislature acted to cut one of the worst taxes in Michigan – the tax on health care benefits for workers.

Cutting this tax makes health care more affordable and available for more workers.

But we're not done.

Right now, our tax laws and regulations are chasing jobs from Michigan and this has to change.

In the year ahead, we want to work with the Governor to reform this system. We want to make our taxes more fair and cut the red tape that makes it easier to hire a new worker in Alabama than in Michigan.

If we are serious about fighting for jobs and helping people find work, then we must and we will make Michigan more competitive.

## CONCLUSION

### *Birkholz*

The Republican vision for Michigan is one where anyone who wants to work can find a job and support their family.

The Republican vision for Michigan is one where every dollar you send to Lansing is a dollar spent teaching our kids, putting a police officer on the streets, or filling a pothole.

The Republican vision for Michigan is one where every student receives a great education, parents have real choices in doing what's best for their kids and our public schools are the best in America.

The Republican vision for Michigan is one that supports families and seniors by making health care more affordable and treatment more available.

And the Republican vision for Michigan is one that offers everyone the opportunity to pave their own path and make the most of the Michigan way of life.

In Lansing and in our districts back home, we will work each and every day to make this vision a reality.

### *Shackleton*

We welcome the opportunity to work with Governor Granholm in doing what's right for people, not what's easiest for government.

In the year ahead, we will fight for every Michigan job and we will do everything we can to make President Bush's national recovery, a Michigan recovery.

That's our promise to you, the people and families of Michigan.

*Birkholz*

Thank you for listening.

Good night and may God bless you, your family, and our great state.